

CLAIMS:

1. An apparatus comprising a master unit and one or more replacement units which connect to the master unit so as to facilitate the operation of said apparatus, the apparatus being provided with a verification means to determine the authenticity and/or the correct connection of the replacement unit, wherein if the replacement unit is not found to be authentic, or is incorrectly connected to the master unit, the operation of the apparatus is modified, characterised in that the verification means comprises: i) a remotely detectable tag provided on, or incorporated in, the replacement unit; and ii) an interrogation means provided in the master unit for interrogating the replacement unit to determine the authenticity of that unit and/or determine if the replacement unit is correctly connected to the master unit, as indicated by the response of the remotely detectable tag.
2. An apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the interrogation means comprises: i) a magnetic field generating means for generating a magnetic field in the region where the replacement unit will be connected; and ii) a means for detecting the response of the tag to said magnetic field.
3. An apparatus as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein the remotely detectable tag comprises one or more pieces of magnetic material.
4. An apparatus as claimed in claim 3, wherein the magnetic material comprises low coercivity, high

permeability magnetic material.

5. An apparatus as claimed in any preceding claim,
wherein the tag comprises a plurality of discrete
5 elements and wherein the elements represent two levels
of encoded information so that the content of one of
the levels of encoded information is capable of being
read by interrogation through the packaging of the
replacement unit and/or interrogation at a greater
10 distance from the interrogation means than the content
of the other level of encoded information.

6. An apparatus as claimed in any preceding claim,
wherein the tag comprises a plurality of discrete
15 elements which are arranged such that the relative
positions of the elements represents information.

7. An apparatus as claimed in claim 6, wherein the
information represented by the plurality of elements
20 identifies the type of replaceable unit and wherein the
operation of the master unit is modified in accordance
with the type of replaceable unit which is or has been
connected.

25 8. An apparatus as claimed in claim 1, 2 or 3, wherein
the tag comprises a) a first magnetic material having a
low magnetic coercivity and b) a second magnetic
material having a medium or high magnetic coercivity
and being capable of being permanently magnetised.

30

9. An apparatus as claimed in claim 8, wherein
selected regions of the second magnetic material are
permanently magnetised to form a magnetic pattern.

10. An apparatus as claimed in claim 9, wherein a recording head in contact with the second magnetic material is required in order to form the magnetic pattern thereon.
11. An apparatus as claimed in any one of claims 8, 9, or 10, wherein the interrogation means further comprises a demagnetising coil which serves, in use, to erase or modify the magnetic pattern.
12. An apparatus as claimed in claim 8, 9, 10 or 11, wherein the tag further comprises a protective layer.
13. An apparatus as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the master unit comprises an electric toothbrush handle and the replaceable unit comprises a brush.
14. An apparatus as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the master unit comprises a printer and the replaceable unit comprises a printer cartridge.
15. An apparatus as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the modification of the operation of the apparatus does not comprise preventing the operation of the apparatus.
16. An apparatus as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the modification of the operation of the apparatus comprises a (predetermined), sub-optimum default operating mode.

17. An apparatus as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the operation of the apparatus comprising the master unit and the replacement unit serves a medical application.

5

18. An apparatus as claimed in claim 17, wherein the master unit comprises a medicine dispensing pump and the replacement unit comprises a medical infusion tube.

10 19. An apparatus as claimed in claim 17 or 18, when read as appended to any one of claims 1 to 14, wherein the modification of the operation of the apparatus comprises suspending the operation of the apparatus.

15 20. An apparatus substantially as herein described with reference to Figures 2 to 7 of the accompanying drawings.

20

25

30